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1959/12/28

TOP SECRET

December 23-28, 1959

Synopsis of State and Intelligence Material Reported to the President

LAOS

A bloodless coup in Laos has been expected as the result of a conversation between Army Commander Ouane and a member of the U.S. training mission. According to the plan, Ouane was to tell Phoui on December 25th that he should resign. If Phoui were to refuse, the Army and CDNI would oust him. This was from the first viewed with some suspicion as being either boasting or an attempt at a provocation to lure Phoui into taking repressive action to truly justify such a move by the Army. Throughout this matter the US has been making every effort to stand aside.

Actually the Committee for the Defense of National Interests (CDNI) apparently delayed the coup in order to give Phoui further time to resign. However, on 26 December, the Army indicated plans to ignore the Phoui government's orders presumably on the ground that the government is no longer legal with the expiration on 25 December of the National Assembly's mandate. Also on 26 December, the CDNI presented some demands to Phoui which resulted in his agreeing to ask the King's approval to allow the present government to resign and be reappointed in a caretaker status. The CDNI would not participate. The King's attitude is apparently that Phoui must remain regardless and he has rejected Phoui's suggestion that he and his government withdraw. Phoui told Smith that he has concluded he, himself, should remain at the helm of the government, thereby conserving the chance of saving the law of democratic regime to "conserve unity." The issue can only be described as unresolved.



AFGHANISTAN

Serious rioting occurred in Kandahar, Afghanistan on 21 December. Byroade reports that the major cause was the Afghan Government's program of unveiling, although possibly there was some unrest over the tax situation. Embassy recommends no reference in public statements to the veil situation since the Afghan Government is very sensitive on this issue. State has requested Byroade to comment

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